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Chairman Church. Would you please take the oath?

Do you swear that everything you will testify to in these proceedings shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. O'Connell. I do.

TESTIMONY OF JAMES P. O'CONNELL

Mr. Schwarz. Would you state your name?

Mr. O'Connell. My name is James P. O'Connell.

Mr. Schwarz. And what is your address?

Mr. O'Connell. 1333 Elsinore Avenue, [redacted] 22101.

Mr. Schwarz. Before we proceed substantively let me just put on the record some matters.

First, you understand that you have a right to counsel?

Mr. O'Connell. I understand that. I just read it.

Mr. Schwarz. And you should also be advised that you have your rights under the Constitution, including your rights under the Fifth Amendment, if at any point you wish to assert whatever rights that you do have that are under those Constitutional provisions.

Do you understand that?

Mr.O'Connell. Yes.

Mr. Schwarz. And if at any time you feel that you need an attorney you have the right to ask for an attorney, do you understand that?

pills?

Mr. O'Connell. The man that created them is Dr. Raymond Trichler.

Mr. Schwarz. Did he hand the pills to you?

Mr. O'Connell. Yes.

Mr. Schwarz. Did he know what the pills were for?

Mr. O'Connell. I don't think so.

Mr. Schwarz. But he knew they were illegal?

Mr. O'Connell. He knew they were illegal.

Mr. Schwarz. And were the pills not tried out on some experimental subjects in the U.S.?

Mr. O'Connell. Yes.

Mr. Schwarz. And proven to be lethal?

Mr. O'Connell. Well, to the extent -- I will tell you that, we used them on hamsters.

Mr. Schwarz. And also monkeys?

Mr. O'Connell. No, as far as I know, just the hamsters.

Mr. Schwarz. But anyway, you knew they were lethal.

Mr. O'Connell. Yes.

Mr. Schwarz. And you handed them over to Rosselli?

Mr. O'Connell. Yes.

Mr. Schwarz. And had the Technical Services made poison pills before as far as you know?

Mr. O'Connell. As far as I know. I have no idea. This was my first experience with that sort of thing.

your possession, that might give you a more accurate timing than I am giving to you now.

Mr. Madigan. We don't have it presently.

Mr. O'Connell. I am sure it is over there.

Mr. Wides. With regard to the discussion of authorization, would it have been following on Mr. Madigan's point, that this was a fairly serious and unusual operation that you were given, and that you would have asked, is this authorized? Or how did the question of Mr. Dulles authorizing it come up, as best you recall?

Mr. O'Connell. I told you, I knew that Mr. Dulles -- I was told that Mr. Dulles had authorized it, I can't say quite when it happened, but I know I was told.

Mr. Wides. You testified this morning -- I don't want to put words in your mouth -- I thought you testified that you were sure that Mr. Edwards told you at this meeting when he first gave you the assignment that you were not sure that Mr. Bissell's also mentioned that when you later met in your office.

Mr. O'Connell. I would stick with that, yes. I think it probably was when I -- when Colonel Edwards called me he said, this probably has the blessing of the DCI.

Mr. Wides. Do you know if Dr. V. S. Roosevelt, who was head of the Technical Services Division at the time, was witnessing about this?

Mr. O'Connell. I wouldn't want to bet my life that he

wasn't. But he was at a meeting when the bills were delivered, and Dr. Treichler came over to Colonel Edwards'office.

Mr. Wides. But you don't recall whether you ever knew that Roosevelt knew what it was in connection with as distinct from merely knowing it was a lethal pill, is that right?

Mr. O'Connell. I can't say -- to my personal knowledge, the discussion never came up when I was there. I don't think he is a dummy, and I don't think Treichler is any dummy, and I think they had a general idea.

But as far as I know they were never officially told.

Mr. Wides. To your knowledge, before you went overseas no one else in the office of Security, Mr. Bannerman, Mr. White or Mr. Hall, none of those men or anyone else knew about the project, only yourself and Mr. Edwards?

Mr. O'Connell. Well, I would say this, to my knowledge they were never briefed. However, I think I brought up an incident this morning where Colonel Edwards was on leave and Colonel King called Mr. Bannerman, who was his deputy, and assumed that Bannerman knew all about it and started talking about it, what are we going to do about this -- I don't know what the conversation was about. And Bannerman called in and said, what was this all about?

Mr. Wides. This was in 1962 before you left?

Mr. O'Connell. Yes. It was while I was up in the office.

And I said, I don't have the authority to brief you on it.

Mr. Wides. Were you ever aware, whether you were formally notified or just got a rumble or heard through the grapevine, that the CIA was getting some information about these threats, or some information about groups who might pose a threat in the Washington area, not from Bureau sources or military sources, but from CIA sources, did you ever hear any rumble of that kind?

Mr. O'Connell. Yes.

Mr. Wides. What did you hear?

Mr. O'Connell. The only way I got involved in it was that Howard Osborn would have a nine o'clock meeting every morning with his deputies.

And they had a proprietary organization in the Office of Security which I think had informants.

Now, I don't know their identities, but it would come out in the meeting, and they would have some names for them. I couldn't tell you what they were.

Mr. Madigan. What was the proprietary called?

Mr. O'Connell. The name that strikes me -- and I know part of it, but I couldn't tell you exactly -- I think it was Anderson --

Mr. Madigan. Anderson Stuart?

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Mr. O'Connell. Anderson Stuart, something like that.

Mr. Wides. You say you think they had informants?

Mr. O'Connell. They obviously did, I guess, because the way this would come out, so-and-so advised at a meeting last

night.

Mr. Wides. If you associate that with Anderson you must have been told more than just, we have an informant. How would it be discussed at the meeting, through this proprietary we have access to information?

Mr. O'Connell. No, it usually would be the Deputy Director that that was under. And that was under OIS.

Mr. Wides. Victor White?

Mr. O'Connell. Victor White.

Mr. Wides. And what would he say about how Anderson fitted into the picture?

Mr. O'Connell. That never came up. I just drew that conclusion, that they had potential.

Mr. Wides. Why would you assume that they used a proprietary as opposed to just having some agents penetrate a group? Why would you think in terms of their using the Anderson --

Mr. O'Connell. I can tell you what I think.

First of all, I wouldn't want to use government employees.

Mr. Wides. Why couldn't the CIA personnel just run agents who would be --

Mr. O'Connell. That is in fact what they were doing. These people that were proprietary were not CIA employees. They were contract teams.

Mr. Wides. Why would you have thought that they would have gone the route of using the proprietary people as opposed to

Did you have any knowledge during the 1970-1971 time frame of any effort outside of Florida with regard to Cubans to fire on the Keys or on the Florida area there with a boat that would be disguised as a Russian boat, which was really a group of people, some of whom were assets of the Agency?

Mr. O'Connell. No.

Mr. Madigan. You never heard of anything like that?

Mr. O'Connell. Nothing of that, no.

Mr. Madigan. Did you ever run across a fellow by the name of Jerry Henning in your dealing with Roselli and Maheu?

Mr.O'Connell. No.

Mr. Madigan. You never heard of the name?

Mr. O'Connell. I never heard of the name.

Mr. Madigan. Did you handle the Agency contact with Mr. Maheu about having him coordinate or set up or be involved in [redacted]

Mr. O'Connelll. A couple of them, as a matter of fact.

Mr. Madigan. A couple [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. Yes.

Mr. Madigan. What was your involvement in that? Am I right about 1959?

Mr. O'Connell. It could be. There were two different occasions.

Mr. Madigan. What is your recollection as to the dates?

Mr.O'Connell. Well, the first one was ________ about 1959.

Mr. Madigan. And how did that come about? Why did it go to you in the Office of Security as opposed to --

Mr. O'Connell. Just like this other one came down from the DDP, it came from the ________ ________ Division, as I recall it. And ________ was coming into the --

Mr. Wides. Off the record.

(Discussion off the record.)

Mr. Madigan. What did your first contact with Maheu with regard to this project involve?

Mr. O'Connell. Well, the request came to the Security.

Mr. Madigan. It came down to you?

Mr. O'Connell. It came through Colonel Edwards.

Mr. Madigan. To you?

Mr. O'Connell. Yes. [redacted]

Mr. Madigan. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted]

Mr. Madigan. So did you contact Maheu directly?

Mr. O'Connell. Yes.

Mr. Wides. In this instance you were talking about [redacted]

Mr.O'Connell. [redacted] wanted some female companionship. And his case officer, the Agency's case officer that was handling the leader, said, let's stick to business while you are in New York. And we will take you out to the West Coast, and that is going to be a pleasure trip, and we will see that you meet the right people.

So Maheu lined up this young lady, who was a starlet, a little cutie, and they knew the type he liked, size and everything.

[redacted]

Mr. Madigan. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted] just about anything and everything that walks in skirts in L.A. and Hollywood.

So Maheu called Gregg and asked him if he could come up with something according to certain specs. And he did. And she was placed in the right atmosphere, at the right time and the leader went head over heels in love with her, to the extent [redacted]

Mr. Madigan. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted] he wasn't involved in it

So what we thought was going to be a passing fancy, he decided he had to go back to New York, and he insisted that she go back with him.

Well, this was getting a little embarrassing, because here he is the head of his country, and he has got this gal on the strings.

So, we agreed to it and she agreed to it, but we had to keep her in one hotel -- she was staying at the Waldorf-Astoria and he was staying in another place. And we got a [redacted]

Mr. Madigan. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted]

Mr. Madigan. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted]

Mr. Madigan. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted]

[redacted]

Mr. Madigan. And was that the end of that particular project that you recall?

Mr. O'Connell. That was the end of it, [redacted] and was lovesick, and he was going to give up the throne, which would have caused all sorts of consternation in the Agency, because that was the last guy that the Agency wanted to leave.

But he was communicating with her for a while, and then eventually we got her a job in a local musical -- that is [redacted]

Mr. Wides. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted]

Mr. Wides. [redacted]

Mr.O'Connell. [redacted]

Mr. Wides. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted]

Mr. Wides. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted]

Mr. Wides. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted]

Mr. Wides. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted]

Mr. Wides. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted]

Mr. Wides. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted]

Mr. Wides. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted]

Mr. Wides. [redacted]

Mr.O'Connell. [redacted]

Mr. Wides. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted]

Mr. Wides. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted]

Mr. Madigan. Yousaid there was a second instance. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted]

Mr. Madigan. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted]

Mr. Madigan. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted]

Mr. Madigan. [redacted]

Mr. O'Connell. [redacted]

[redacted]

Mr. Madigan. Did Maheu set that up?

Mr. O'Connelll. Yes.

Mr. Mdigan. Both the original contact and the later party in San Francisco?

Mr. O'Connell. Yes.

Mr. Madigan. And were those the only two times now that he was involved in the operations field?

Mr. O'Connelll. Oh, no. He did a lot of other things.

Mr. Madigan. Let me ask you this question.

When Maheu was having his problems with the authorities, was there any reference back to his involvement in those kind of activities, or was the only discussion about his role in the so-called assassination plot?

Mr. O'Connell. Well, I am not even so sure that they got into that aspect of it. It was just that he was involved to the extent that he had set up the operation against Rowan, or he was the one that got in touch with DuBois to do it.

Mr. Wides. When did you come back from overseas?

Mr. O'Connell. July of 1965.

Mr. Wides. After you came back did you learn of a time, either after you came back or very shortly before you came

veillance?

Mr. O'Connell. Never, to my knowledge he never got involved in that, officially or otherwise.

Mr. Wides. Or surreptitious entry?

Mr. O'Connell. He did one surreptitious entry for us once.

Mr. Wides. What were the specifics of that?

Mr. O'Connell. There were a group of [redacted] students. [redacted], and they were going to the Georgetown School [redacted]. And they were staying in a rooming house up there right outside of Georgetown somehere. And one of the students came to the case officer, and said that one of the group was acting very suspiciously, taking a lot of notes where they were not supposed to be taking notes, or certainly after operational briefings, and he would go back to his room and he would write voluminous notes. And he thought that was very strange that this guy was not acting as he should.

And that aroused the suspicion of the case officer. And they wanted to know whether we would get in and photograph what he was writing to see whether he was really violating his agreement.

So I called Maheu and he went up to the rooming house, and he went to the people who owned the house and asked if they had a room to rent and she had one. And he did know where the students were staying. And she showed him one room. And

he said, anything up on thenext floor? And as luck would have it, she had the adjacent room.

So he brought what would appear to be a suitcase up there, which was his photographic equipment. And we knew the students were in school, and the case officer was going to alert us if they came back, so he wouldn't get caught in the act.

And he went in, it was a very simple matter. It was a tin box that he could open with a paper clip and he took it out and photographed it, and put the case back in the drawer and locked up and left.

But the case officer was a gal, a woman. And she was looking at one part of the school over there. And this guy comes out the back door. And as Maheu was coming down the stairs the students were coming up, with amatter of maybe a split second timing.

Mr. Madigan. This wasn't Mendoz?

Mr. O'Connell. No. This was a DDP case officer.

Mr. Wides. What period was this that we are talking about?

Mr. O'Connell. This would have been about 1955.

Mr. Wides. And other than that, and the two incidents involving female companioship, what other kinds of sensitive things would he undertake? Was that in the period that you were paying him 500 a month?

Mr. O'Connell. We stopped paying the 500 way back when he

nature as opposed to routine?

Mr. O'Connell. We had word that they wanted to -- apparently this foreign leader had visited the Kremlin, and we were reasonably certain -- he [redacted] liked just about any time to be accommodated.

So, we knew that he went to the Kremlin [redacted]

And this was all done by people that knew generally what they looked like.

Now, we got Bob to make that film.

Mr. Wides. [redacted] Soviets had made a film of the foreign leader when he was in Russia and was hoping to have a counterfeit film which they would circulate in the country, thereby making the foreign leader angry at the Soviets, was that the purpose?

Mr.O'Connell. I don't know whether they knew that the Soviets had made the film. But the purpose of the exercise was to have a film circulated in his own country, or neighboring countries, that would make him quite upset with the Soviets.

Mr. Wides. You mean they thought that the Russians had made a film?

Mr. O'Connell. Yes, to embarrass him.

Mr. Madigan. And that was accomplished as far as you know?

Mr. O'Connell. The film was made, but they never did release it, because things started to get better with the leader, and they felt that they wouldn't use it.

Mr. Madigan. Were Agency facilities used by Maheu for the production of this thing?

Mr. O'Connell . No. I hired a small independent studio in Los Angeles.

Mr. Madigan. And did Agency officials fly out there, the ones that knew about the backdrop and all that? How was that done?

Mr. O'Connell. It seems to me that they were just -- at this point I am not too sure whether they superimposed it, I guess is the word, with that background. I am not so sure at this point, it has been so long ago. That was away in the mid-fifties.

Mr. Wides. Could we get back to the question that we had started on, which was the files and where they would exist? You said that the operational files from all of your dealing with him would be in the Family Jewels, because they were all sensitive admissions.

Mr. O'Connell. Yes.

Mr. O'Connell. No.

Mr. Wides. Or Max Gonzales.

Mr. O'Connell. No.

Mr. Wides. While you were down there -- and this may overlap the question that Mr. Madigan asked before, but I think it is a little more -- did you have any awareness of any other efforts apart from Mr. Verona by Cubans in connection with the Agency to try and assassinate Castro?

Mr. O'Connell. No, none whatsoever.

Mr. Wides. I don't have any other questions.

Mr. Madigan. In your operational activities with Mr. Maheu, particularly in the New York area, did you ever have contact with a private investigator by the name of A. J. Woolston-Smith?

Mr. O'Connell. No, I never heard of him.

Mr. Wides. Do you know why there were two field offices in New York, two iffices in Manhatten?

What was the difference?

Mr. O'Connell. The cover. One was under Treasury cover and the other under Defense.

Mr. Wides. Were there two offices?

Mr. O'Connell. Why, they had them, it just grew like Topsy. They had two offices in Washington, and they had two offices in New York. And really the basis -- it was that that was the way they started, they figured they needed two

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different type covers because of the type of work they were doing.

Mr. Wides. What would the New York offices do as distinct from the Manhattan offices, or vice versa?

Mr. O'Connell. Nothing. They were basically investigative offices.

Mr. Wides. They just happened to have two?

Mr.O'Connell. They had two. [redacted]. The Manhattan field office. And then they eventually merged. Now they are over on [redacted] I think.

Mr. Wides. Thank you very much. That concludes the session. And we appreciate your staying so long.

(Whereupon, at 1:25 p.m., the hearing was concluded.)

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